

as big as a boned ham, and at every turn he is met with the friendly smile. He finds this town a place of kind hearts and sunny corners. He was just saying how he was sorry he wa'n't stayin' here long enough to get better acquainted with more of us, when he's struck with a sudden spasm of memory.

WHY, great snakes!" says he, swattin' his knee.

"Here I've plumb forgot about lookin' up old Doc Keezar. Don't happen to know anybody of that name, do you,—Henry M. Keezar?"

"No," says I. "What kind of a doctor is he,—pill, tooth, or horse?"

Mr. Hooper explains that his friend wa'n't a reg'lar doctor of any brand; but got his tag on account of havin' been a professor in some college. Bug had met him out West, where the Doc had gone for his health. They'd got some chummy on a couple of prospectin' trips, located some claims, and in the end Keezar got so interested in minin' that he went to work and invented a self dumping ore car.

"It was a mighty slick thing, all right," says Hooper; "but it wasn't worth wasting so much time over. Why, just as I'd figured out a scheme to develop our property, he takes it into his head he's got to come on East and sell that patent of his. Was willing to cash in all his holdings, too, for enough money to take him to New York. Well, I scraped it up and let him have it; but of course I wouldn't take such an advantage of a friend. I never had the share transfers made. That's nearly two years ago, without his writing a single line. He'll be some surprised when he hears what his share is worth to-day. Guess he must have made good on here, though; for they're making those cars of his by the thousand. Saw some of 'em only yesterday."

The more he talks about Doc

Keezar, the keener he is on huntin' him up right away.

"Why, maybe he's living in one of these houses along here," says he, "or at some of these clubs. Oh, Doc is a high flyer when he has the cash! Let's see, what was that club he told about belonging to? Had something to do with colleges, if I remember right."

"You don't mean the University Club?" says I.



"Here's Some of Your Property You Can Keep!" Explodes Hooper.

"That's it!" says Bug, and in ten minutes more we're bein' rolled up in front of the stone seals and the Latin remarks.

"Well, now! Swell outfit, eh?" says Bug, takin' a peep at the entrance. "But if Doc's struck it as rich as I suspect, this would just suit him. And if he ain't here, I reckon they can put us on his trail. I'll run in and see."

He didn't stay long. All he found out was that Professor Keezar's name hadn't been on the list for ten years back.

"You might try the telephone book," says I.

Hooper did; but there wa'n't a Keezar of any description in it. Then we strikes a drug store and paws through the K's in a city directory. Nothing doing there, either.

"Huh!" growls Mr. Hooper. "That's queer. Mean to tell me a man like Henry M. Keezar, a professor and a rich inventor, can't be found anywhere in this town?"

"If he's part of the floatin' population," says I, "it might be some hard to locate him. Better give it up."

Hooper don't like the idea of lettin' go, once he's set out to do a thing; but as I don't get much excited over the search, and as he can't think of any other lines to follow up, we resumes our observation trip up Broadway.

He can't get the Doc out of his mind, though. He goes on tellin' me what a fine old chap he was, and all about his gentle ways, and how honest and white he was clear through.

"And to think," says Hooper, "that probably he's right in this city, maybe riding around just like we are; and I can't so much as—"

MR. HOOPER'S flow of vain regret stops as sudden as if he'd swallowed a cork. I looks around to see what's happened, and finds him starin', with his eyes set and his mouth open, at the people on the sidewalk. Our car has been held up by a line of cross-town traffic, and as we are next to the curb he gets a good view.

As near as I can make out, though, what he's lookin' at hard-est is only one of these walkin' handbills,—a seedy, watery eyed old party with mangy whiskers, whose costume is mostly covered

Continued on page 22

LIFE AND DOOM OF THE HUMMINGBIRD

By René Bache

A BILL recently before the British House of Commons, which had already passed the Lords, prohibits the importation of the skins of hummingbirds; the object of the measure being to prevent the extermination of those exquisite feathered creatures.

Hummingbirds, of course, are exceedingly numerous in tropical America; but, when it is considered that no fewer than six thousand millions of their skins have been sent to market up to date, it will be realized that they are in serious danger of being wiped off the face of the earth. A former Governor of Trinidad testified before a committee of the Lords that forty years ago at least eighteen species of hummingbird were common on that island, whereas at the present time only five were left. The redthroat used to fly constantly into the rooms of dwellings, and its nests were frequently found in the bushes; but this was a thing of the past.

Orders used frequently to reach Trinidad from New York for ten thousand or fifteen thousand hummingbird skins; and, to fill these demands, whole species were destroyed. Nowadays exportation of the skins from the island is prohibited, and the little birds are increasing in numbers; but supplies are easily obtained from elsewhere, especially from Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. They are most abundant in Ecuador. Some species are restricted to single mountain peaks or valleys, while others, known as "hermits," are found in the darkest and least known parts of the forests of Brazil.

Caught by Indians

THE skins of hummingbirds are exported by millions from Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, and Bogotá. Many dealers at those ports are engaged exclusively in the business of buying and shipping them, the demand for them, chiefly for millinery purposes, being always equal to the available supply. Many are killed with guns and very small shot; considerable numbers are captured in nets; but the method commonly employed by the native Indians, who furnish most of the skins, is to shoot them with the blowpipe, a weapon they know how to use with astonishing accuracy.

This instrument is a hollow reed, and the projectile, which is discharged by a sudden puff of the breath, is a small pellet of clay. This suffices to knock down the little bird, and does no harm to the plumage. The expense for ammunition, of course, is nil. To remove and preserve the dainty skins properly is a delicate job, requiring no little skill; but the Indians learned the art long ago from the whites, and are able to practise it with great expertness.

One reason why hummingbirds are so interesting is that they are exclusively American, being unknown in the Old World. No white man ever saw one up to

the date of the landing of Columbus. About five hundred species are known, the smallest being Princess Helena's hummingbird, native to Cuba; while the largest is the giant hummingbird of the Andes, nine inches in length, which, as it hovers over a flower, flaps its wings with a slow and powerful movement. This is a striking characteristic, inasmuch as other hummingbirds are remarkable for the rapidity with which their wings vibrate.

As most people have had opportunities to notice, the wings of a hummingbird flap with such rapidity as to present a mere blur to the eye. It is probable that the vibrations are not fewer than five hundred to the minute. Though so tiny, the dainty feathered creatures have very powerful wing muscles; and it is worth remarking that they fly rather like insects than like birds. Their proper home is the air,—walk they cannot without the help of their wings, though they perch,—and some species make annual migrations of nearly two thousand miles.

It used to be supposed that hummingbirds could not be kept alive in captivity for any length of time, though they are easily tamed. This notion, however, has been disproved by a naturalist, Captain Albert Pam, who several years ago managed to carry a number of living hummingbirds from Venezuela to London, where they were placed in the Zoological Gardens. Being kept there in a warm house, they have thriven nicely.

They Live on Insects

IT is not true, as commonly supposed, that hummingbirds feed exclusively on the nectar of flowers. They do drink the nectar; but it seems probable that their provender consists chiefly of small insects, which they find on the blossoms of plants. Often they are seen to rob spiders' webs of the flies they contain, not hesitating to run some risk of being caught themselves; for many a snare woven by the industrious arachnid is strong enough to hold one of these little birds, once tangled in it.

It is only the male hummingbird, as a rule, that is arrayed in gorgeous colors. Sometimes it is the throat that is luminous; in other species there is a halo of radiance on the crown, while in yet others the tails are brilliant. The "comets" have forked tails of glowing red. One kind of hummingbird changes its throat instantly from vivid fire color to light green; another from bright crimson to blue,—an alteration made possible by the fact that the hues of these "feathered jewels" are attributable not to pigments,

but to structure. Each feather has a myriad of facets, so disposed as to present many angles to the light; whence the peculiar rainbow effect.

The chief enemy of the hummingbird is man. Other birds, even hawks, are afraid to attack it. Swift and incredibly agile on the wing, it will dart menacingly at a pursuer's eyes, and yet be out of reach a fraction of a second later. Monkeys often steal the eggs of hummingbirds, and on this account, for the sake of safety, the "hermits" fasten their nests to the ends of long leaves, with spiders' webs. Others, just below the snow line of the Andes, hang their nests from tendrils, and when one side is heavier than the other put a pebble in to make the balance. Yet others use spiders' webs to attach their nests, like tiny hammocks, to the faces of cliffs.

Fairies in Feathers

THESE are in truth the fairies of the feathered world. Their nests, which are sometimes made to imitate tree knots or pine cones, for the sake of concealment, are built of plant-down chiefly, interwoven and held together with spiders' webs; such webs being likewise made to serve for fastening them to twigs. Usually they are cup shaped or turban shaped. But always they are of exquisite construction, and the number of eggs laid, of immaculate whiteness, is invariably two.

One might, indeed, imagine that these tiny birds were related to the flowers. Not only do they dwell among them, and feed upon their nectar, but their very structure exhibits, as one might say, certain obvious and even conspicuous floral adaptations. Thus, for example, the sicklebill is provided with a hook-like beak to fit the curved throats of certain orchids, while the sword bearer, to reach the honey glands of long, trumpet shaped blossoms common in the region it inhabits, has a bill five inches in length, with a tongue that can be protruded far beyond.

The ruby and topaz hummingbird is the species mostly exported from tropical America for the trimming of hats and bonnets. Already it is showing signs of serious diminution. But there are still plenty more, of other kinds, to supply the market. For instance, down in Texas the other day five hundred hummingbirds were ordered for a single banquet. The demand will continue, doubtless, and will be met in years to come by the destruction of additional millions, and in the long run billions, of the dainty and beautiful creatures. Eventually, however, it will be with them as with the buffalo, and, a century or two from now, when they have begun to be scarce, the skin hunters, spurred to extra effort by advanced prices, will be pursuing the few survivors to final extinction in the more remote and inaccessible regions of tropical America.